



News Release

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Seattle Children's Hospital receives 'statement of deficiencies' in child death

Procedures may have contributed to infant's death, document says

OLYMPIA — A state report finds inadequate procedures at Seattle Children's Hospital, "may potentially have contributed to the death" of a baby being prepared for transfer to the facility in September.

The four-month investigation by the state Department of Health concluded the hospital didn't meet a legal requirement that only authorized practitioners may issue orders "for all drugs, intravenous solutions, blood, medical treatments, and nutrition." According to the investigative report, before leaving the transferring hospital, a nurse from the Children's transport crew gave the baby medication without a physician's order. The baby died a short time later.

The Department of Health inquiry looked at the records of a dozen patients who were prepared for transfer to the hospital in September 2010. The investigation found that in all 12 cases the hospital failed to ensure that there were signed orders from authorized practitioners when drugs and other medications were given to patients. Department investigators concluded that this, "placed all patients at risk."

The findings conclude that, "Hospital leadership failed to establish hospital-wide patient care services appropriate for the patients served." The investigation found that the hospital did not ensure proper supervision of registered nurses who worked on transport teams.

The state health department has directed hospital leaders to develop a "plan of correction" to address the deficiencies. The Department of Health will work with the hospital to make sure the corrections are put into place.

In response to these findings, the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) authorized state health investigators to conduct a survey on its behalf. In a January 12 letter,

— More —

CMS informed Children's of the serious deficiencies identified, and as a result will conduct a second unannounced comprehensive survey to assess compliance with all CMS requirements.

The state inquiry's goals were to determine what took place and whether appropriate hospital policies and procedures might have helped prevent it. Existing policies and procedures were reviewed during the investigation, along with case records and documents. Both hospital officials and medical personnel were interviewed.

In November, the department released results of investigations into three other recent cases at Children's. In those cases, no deficiencies were found in the hospital's systems; however, investigations continue into the health care providers involved in all four cases.

For copies of the findings, the investigative report, and the hospital's plan of correction contact [Allison Cook](mailto:allison.cook@doh.wa.gov) (allison.cook@doh.wa.gov) by e-mail.

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